an unspeakable of the oscar wilde sort

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Category: IT (2017)

Genre: Aged-Up Character(s), Angst with a Happy Ending, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, by which i mean they're in high school here, it's an adventure?, mostly eddie has some internal

struggles, richie and eddie watch maurice

Language: English

Characters: Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier **Relationships:** Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed Published: 2017-10-15 Updated: 2017-10-15

Packaged: 2020-01-26 15:15:25 Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1 Words: 3,582

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Richie brings a new tape to his and Eddie's standing Friday night movie night, a period drama called Maurice, but neither of them really have any idea what to expect. They're certainly not expecting what they get.

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Author's Note:

So the fic is set in 1994, which means that in the current movie timeline the boys are about 18, and probably seniors in high school, that's kind of what I'm going off of. I set it in 1994 so they could have seen Hugh Grant in something else, and that could be the motivation for them watching Maurice - because I'm pretty sure there wouldn't just be a copy of Maurice available in Derry anywhere. Anyways, there's some spoilers for Maurice here, so if you've haven't seen it or read it, I really would recommend it, but if you don't mind, I guess you can probably gather the most important bits of what I'm trying to get across from the movie from just Eddie's internal monologue. I hope you enjoy either way!

By the time the Losers were in high school, there were times they didn't do everything together. Well. There were times that Richie and Eddie would split off - mainly at some point, they'd developed their own standing movie night. They weren't dates - just. Plans. Standing plans. It didn't matter that Richie and Eddie were trying to plan to go to the same college as well - frankly all the Losers had tried to figure out if there were colleges they could all apply to together. So it didn't mean anything really special. Well. Maybe Richie was his best friend, that was all. Richie was his best friend now instead of Bill - Bill and Mike had gotten pretty close anyways.

Eddie would go over to Richie's every Friday night, and they'd watch something on tape, and then sometimes Eddie would stay over if he needed the night away from his mom. Richie's parents never bothered coming up to his room - which was its own sort of problem, but it meant that Richie could have Eddie over easier than Eddie could get anyone into his house.

It had probably started that summer Eddie had found out all his medications were fake - just having a night a week away from his house helped with that - with his mom, with him not breaking down

on his mom, or because of his mom. She still tried to give him the pills or his inhaler, but he didn't take them, and he didn't even carry them with him. Even the inhaler, it had turned out, was bullshit. He had panic attacks - not asthma. And Richie and all the other Losers knew how to help him if anything happened - but they'd mostly gone away now.

He'd never had a panic attack hanging out with Richie on a Friday night.

At least he hadn't yet.

Most of the time they watched the same movies - Eddie'd lost count of how many times they'd seen Ghostbusters. Still, sometimes Richie would find something they'd never seen.

This Friday was apparently going to be like that.

They were settled in Richie's room, sitting on his bed, when Richie pulled out a new VHS. There were two men riding horses on the cover - it looked like a period drama. Eddie flushed a little to think about the time he'd actually admitted to Richie that he enjoyed the movies he'd used to watch with his mom from time to time, like the old Orson Welles Jane Eyre. Richie had laughed a little, but not in a mean way - and now apparently he'd picked one for them to watch.

"I found this when Bev and I were thrift shopping in Portland the other weekend - it's got that Hugh Grant guy in it, the one you like from that romantic comedy you liked that just came out not too long ago - Four Weddings and a Funeral?"

Eddie tried not to get embarrassed again. Of course even Richie couldn't find out exactly why he'd been so fond of that movie - part of it had been Hugh Grant, because Eddie liked looking at him,but part of it had been the gay couple in the background - even if one of them had died.

Eddie tried not to think about why he'd been so fond of them. Or anything about - any of that.

He took the VHS and looked at it. The title on the front said

Maurice.He flipped it over, skimming over the description. There was something about coming of age and men falling in love, but Eddie knew that most coming of age stories involved people getting married off somewhere along the way.

"I don't know what the hell it's about, but I figure if it's just like, shit, we can turn it off. You wanna give it a shot?"

Eddie shrugged. Nothing about it seemed weird - it was based on some book he'd never heard of. "Yeah, okay."

Richie made popcorn and the two of them got settled in.

The movie started with a boy at a fairly young age - and then his professor started explaining sex to him. Richie kept snickering, and Eddie rolled his eyes and tried not to smile.

At the end of the scene, Richie turned to him. "This is officially my new favorite movie, I just think you should know that."

"God you're such an idiot." He shoved at Richie's shoulder, and Richie threw an arm around him, and Eddie just sighed, and finally smiled, and got settled again.

Only that started to get a little difficult, the longer the film went on.

The movie had apparently come out before Four Weddings and A Funeral - Hugh Grant was younger here, and. Really attractive. Eddie kept staring, and hoping he could pass it off as watching the film. Then the main actor was attractive as well, even though Eddie had never seen him in anything, and then. Eddie started to realize that something was going on.

It still took until Clive sat down in Maurice's lap to be sure, but when they nearly kissed, there wasn't really anything left to doubt. Clive confessing his love was just icing on the cake.

Richie's arm was still around Eddie for some reason, and Eddie didn't want to move away, but he wasn't really sure what to do.

Then again, Richie wasn't really reacting at all. He was just staring at the movie - so Eddie kept watching, too.

Richie didn't say anything - which was. Unusual to say the least.

Clive and Maurice's friend got punished, and Clive decided to get married, and Eddie found himself blinking back tears. The movie was beautiful - beautifully made, with beautiful music, and Eddie wanted more than anything for Maurice to be happy - but of course, he knew he wouldn't be. People like that didn't get to be happy. All the graffiti on the kissing bridge, all the things his mother had said, all the things Henry Bowers had said - Eddie knew enough to know that was true.

Only then Maurice met Alec. Alec, who was frankly even more attractive than Hugh Grant, and nice and affectionate, and although there was still tension and conflict - in the end, Maurice and Alec did get to be happy.

The credits for the film were surprisingly short, and Eddie was still sitting there trying to process all that he'd seen. He was crying a little, so he wiped his face, and turned his head just so Richie wouldn't see.

There'd been a happy ending. Maurice and Alec had found a way. They'd kissed, and even had sex, and they were going to run away and be happy - happily ever after, unlike Clive. Clive who got the unhappy ending because he'd kept lying to himself, not because he liked boys.

For one brief, sudden moment, Eddie had a spark of courage. He turned back around to look at Richie - who was suddenly shifting awkwardly on the couch.

Richie laughed, uncomfortably, and Eddie's heart fell into his stomach.

"Well that was.... weird, huh? Sorry. About that. I didn't really - uh. I guess I didn't read the back."

"You don't normally read much of anything," Eddie said automatically, but his voice was too quiet, and the tone was all wrong. "You... you didn't turn it off, though."

"No, uh.... You looked pretty interested, so I. I mean just in the. I

figured you wanted to know what happened. I didn't mean..."

Eddie felt sick, suddenly - felt the hot wash of shame come over him, and felt something rise up in his throat. He stood up, to get away from Richie, and his hands, and his arms, and his eyes, big behind his glasses, big and dark like they always were, and the little freckles that Eddie could see on the bridge of his nose when they sat close.

"Yeah I - sorry, I should probably go home. I didn't... I guess I just got sort of caught up, sorry I made you watch it."

And then Eddie was practically running, ignoring whatever Richie may have said behind him, going to his bike and getting home as quick as he could - only he'd barely gotten away when his lungs started to constrict and his breathing sped up, and he realized he was having a panic attack.

He stopped, stopped pedaling and nearly fell off his bike, and just sat in the grass on the side of the road, trying to remember how he was supposed to breathe. He'd spent a whole day with Ben, at the library, doing research, and he had things that were supposed to help him.

Richie was better at it - better at putting his hands on Eddie's shoulders and breathing slow, getting him to calm down - but now thinking of Richie just made it all worse, so Eddie shut his eyes tight and put his hands over his face and tried not to think of anything except his own breathing.

In, and out. In, and out.

He thought of Maurice, and Alec, and the way they held each other at the boathouse, and he was surprised to find that it helped. He pictured Alec doing what Richie would normally do, telling him to breathe, and he found that although he was still shaking, he'd calmed down enough to breathe again, and to stand up and finish riding his bike home.

He tried not to think about the fact that Richie hadn't come after him.

When he got back to his house, he avoided his mother and went up

to his room, and lay down in his bed and stared at his ceiling.

He'd heard a lot of names for - whatever it was. Whatever it was that he probably was. Flamer. Fag. Queer. Those were the ones Bowers and his gang had tended to use. Then there were the ones people had called Maurice - homosexual. Unspeakable - an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort. Eddie had heard that name before, but now he suddenly wanted to know more - maybe he could go to the library and just... see. See if they had anything. Maybe he could talk to Ben, and Ben wouldn't get upset - he'd rarely seen Ben upset about anything.

Somehow he kind of felt like Bev might understand, too - might smile and give him a hug and tell him that it was okay. Maybe he could tell her, too.

Whatever he'd thought in the moment, whatever crazy impulse he'd had, he obviously couldn't talk to Richie. And that... That hurt for reasons that Eddie still didn't want to think about - still wasn't ready to face up to, even if he could admit that he'd watched Maurice and Alec kissing, and he'd wanted to watch a kissing scene for the first time in his life.

That he'd watched the scene of Clive and Maurice laying in that field, wrapped up in each other, playing with each other's hair, just touching each other softly, and he'd wanted that more than anything else in the world. That, with another boy. Just like in the movie.

Maybe... maybe he'd thought that boy could be Richie. Maybe he could admit that after all. But he'd been wrong. That wasn't so bad. Maurice and Clive hadn't worked out, after all, and Maurice still got to be happy. Maybe Eddie could be okay, too.

He sat up on his bed, and wiped his face again - he went to the bathroom, got cleaned up, and put on his pyjamas. It was late, and he was lying in bed still thinking about the movie instead of sleeping, when he heard a noise at his window.

His heart sped up.

The thing was, Richie snuck in his window all the time. Richie, and

pretty much no one else. Eddie sat up, and went over to his window, and pushed it open. Richie climbed in.

There'd been a lot of sneaking in windows in the movie, hadn't there? Eddie blushed, glad that it was dark, and tried not to think about that.

"So I, ah. I maybe should have planned this a little more."

"There's a plan?"

"Well. No, that's what I'm..." Richie sighed, and went over to sit on Eddie's bed. Eddie just watched him. "I'm sorry I was... weird. After the movie."

Eddie tensed up. This wasn't exactly a conversation he wanted to have. "It... makes sense. To be weird about it. It makes more sense than... Look, Richie, please can we just not talk about this? I'd rather... Thank you for coming to apologize, but I really don't want to talk about this."

"Eddie..." Richie stood up again, and walked over so they were standing nearly face to face. They'd both grown, in high school, but Richie was still just a little bit taller. "That was dumb. And shitty. That I freaked out. I'm not... I'm not like Bowers and those assholes at school, I'm not a fucking dick like that, and I didn't mean for it to... seem like that."

Eddie's heart sped up again. "You talk like it matters to me either way. It doesn't. I'm not..." His voice caught. He didn't want to lie -but he didn't want to do this with Richie. "It just doesn't matter. Look, so both of us just wanted to know what happened, and we got sort of caught up, so neither of us turned it off. It doesn't have to mean anything, you don't have to make a big thing out of it."

It was dark in Eddie's room still, but he could tell that Richie looked sort of sad.

"It seemed like you were going to say something. When the movie ended. And you looked over at me. And I... freaked out, and I didn't let you say anything. I didn't mean to."

Eddie bit into his lip so hard it hurt, and he turned his head. "Richie. Don't make me do this with you. I don't want to do this with you. Can't we just... go back and pretend it didn't happen and we can just... You don't have to be weird. I don't want you to be weird."

"What do you mean with me?"

"Rich..."

"No, what do you mean? Eddie, come on."

Finally, something snapped, and Eddie was angry. "You're my best friend, Rich! We hang out once a week and we're supposed to go to college together and you're obviously uncomfortable, and if I say it, and you hear me say it, then it's real and you'll be uncomfortable around me forever, and you already haven't touched me since you walked in, and it's gonna be like that all the time, because that's what happens, isn't it? I'm - Bev might not mind because it's different, and I can't imagine Ben or Mike ever being bothered by much of anything, but I've known you and Bill and Stan longer than anyone, and if I've always been like this, and I have, and you... Just. Please, Rich. Please don't make me do this."

Richie walked over, and he put his hands on Eddie's face. Eddie looked up at him, blinking, startled.

"Eddie. Breathe."

Once Richie said it, Eddie found he was panicking again, so he did what Richie said and he followed his breathing, and once he'd calmed down, Richie pulled him into a hug. A long hug - he didn't try to hold Eddie at arm's length or pull away immediately - he just stayed there. And Eddie relaxed.

"You're really not... it doesn't bother you?"

"No, Eddie. I actually... I should probably say something, too. But you should go first."

"I... Why don't you go first?"

"Cause you're braver than I am, Eds. Go ahead."

Eddie couldn't get up the fake annoyance to tell Richie off for the nickname at a time like this, so he just took a deep breath against Richie's shoulder, and then pulled back to look him in the eyes. "I... I'm..." He wasn't sure of the best word to use. Was gay the right one? Nobody really used that one. Not in Derry. He just fell back on the movie, even though he flushed when he said it, feeling silly. "I'm an unspeakable. Of the Oscar Wilde sort."

Richie smiled at him, just a little, and Eddie tried to smile too. He'd said it, and nothing broke, or shattered, no one died. And Richie was still touching him.

"What did you want to say?" Eddie asked.

"Well mine's uh. A little more complicated. Cause I think I... I mean the movie sort of... Clive's. Sort of the bad guy, right? And I get that. What he did was... bad. He was stupid. But it seems like he actually... likes Anne. He just liked Maurice more. And I... I think I'm sort of like that. But I would never... The way that he treats Maurice when he breaks up with him, I would never... But I don't know if that's. A thing. You know? Liking... both."

Eddie blinked at Richie. That hadn't been what he'd expected at all. "You mean you like. Guys and girls?"

Richie nodded. "Yeah I. I think so."

There was another pause. "I don't... know anything either. I was thinking of going to the library with Ben - or maybe. Maybe the library in Portland would have something if Derry doesn't. I don't really know enough either, even about. What I am. I only know the things Henry Bowers used to say, and my mom, and... You know. But if you... if you feel like that, Richie, it must exist. Maybe... Maybe I'm that way, too, and I just haven't... found any girls yet."

Richie shook his head. "You shouldn't do that to yourself, Eds. I only know cause of how I used to look at Bev before we got to be the way we are now - I had a thing for her, and I have a thing for - I mean, it's just. I know how it is. I know it's the same. If you've never felt like that and you've tried, I don't think you should push yourself."

Eddie nodded. "You're probably right." He kept processing everything Richie had said, and he was suddenly conscious he still had his hands on Richie's shoulders, and that Richie's hands were still at his waist. He dropped his hands and shifted on his feet a little. "Did you... Were you saying you have a thing for someone? For a boy?"

In a rare turn of events, Richie blushed. Eddie had almost never seen him do that. "I. Yeah. Have you ever...?"

"I've... been interested in someone before. Nothing's ever... happened. When I was watching the movie I-"

It was too hard to get out - Eddie couldn't admit all the things he'd been thinking before Richie had climbed in his window.

Oh. Richie had climbed in his window.

"Richie. Was there... a reason you came in the window?"

The blush came back. Richie wasn't touching him anymore, but he stepped closer. "Right. Well. I was... getting to that. I told you I should have had a plan."

This time when Eddie's heart sped up, it was in the good way.

"Richie..." He stepped a little closer too, and Richie put his hands back on Eddie's face.

"Is this... alright? Am I..."

"Richie," Eddie said again softly, and he leaned up a little, and closed his eyes.

One of the two of them finally closed the gap, but Eddie wasn't really sure of who. He put his hands on Richie's waist to help steady himself, and they were kissing - Eddie was kissing a boy, and a boy that he really, really liked. Richie's glasses were digging into his nose a little, and it was soft and chaste, and it wasn't perfect, or magic, but it was better than anything Eddie had imagined lying on his own.

Then he tilted his head, and he started moving his lips, and touched

out the tip of his tongue so he could taste Richie's mouth, and then - *Oh*.

They kissed for a few minutes, and when they pulled back, Eddie brushed his nose against Richie's cheek, and stayed close. He could feel that his lips were still damp, and he thought about the moment in the movie when Alec had pulled back from his kiss with Maurice and you could see his lips were damp, too, and he thought, suddenly, that maybe he and Richie could have a happily ever after all.

"Eds... Can I stay over?"

"Not if you call me that," Eddie said, smiling, and finally feeling like himself again.

"Mmmm, tough deal. Cause I thought... I thought maybe we could... lie down and I could... Touch your hair. And we could... Just lie there. Like that."

Eddie could tell Richie got nervous in the middle, but it only made the whole thing more wonderful. He leaned in and kissed Richie again, and then he let Richie change into the pyjamas he kept in Eddie's room, and they lay down on the bed together, Eddie's head on Richie's chest, and Richie ran his fingers through Eddie's hair, and it actually was sort of perfect.

"Fine," Eddie said sleepily, "I guess you get to stay either way. But try your best to avoid the dumb nicknames."

"You love it, Eddie Spaghetti."

"Don't push your luck, asshole."

It was possible that Eddie's words were a little undermined by the fondness in his voice, but his eyes were closed, so he could only feel Richie chuckle quietly before he drifted off to sleep.

Author's Note:

So hi. Wow. As a long time fan of the miniseries, I've been meaning to write a Richie/Eddie fic for like at least five years or maybe longer, but the new movie

and all these new people in the fandom have got me all excited so I finally did it. What's funny is I'm working on at least like three other fics, but this is the one that got finished first.

If you liked it you can find me on tumblr at my IT blog, which is eddykaspbraks, or on my main, which is freddynewandykes! And I'm also, as I said, planning on writing more reddie, and I'm really excited.